



## **FACT SHEET**

### **Office of Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention**

**October 2015**

#### **Problem Gambling in Iowa**

Over the past 25 years, Iowa has seen a dramatic expansion of gambling and gaming opportunities. As of September 2015, Iowans can choose from 19 casinos licensed by the Iowa Racing and Gaming Commission, three tribal casinos, 2,400 lottery outlets, and over 2,800 social and charitable gaming licenses, as well as numerous internet and other illegal gaming opportunities. The cumulative effect of this expansion is easy access to gambling in every county of the state.

#### **Problem gambling defined**

For most people, gambling is recreational. However, for some people, gambling leads to serious problems. Problem gambling means participation in any form of gambling activity that creates a negative consequence to the gambler or to the gambler's family, employer, or community. The adjacent table identifies the signs and symptoms of problem gambling.

#### **Overview of services**

Services funded through the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) Office of Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention are guided by a public health approach that considers the biological, behavioral, economic and cultural determinants that influence gambling and health. This approach incorporates a balance of outreach, education, prevention, treatment, and recovery support efforts that work together to minimize gambling's potential negative impacts on individuals, families and communities, while recognizing gambling's availability, cultural acceptance and economic appeal.

<b>Signs and Symptoms of Problem Gambling</b>
1. Needs to gamble with increasing amounts of money in order to achieve the desired excitement.
2. Is restless or irritable when attempting to cut down or stop gambling.
3. Has made repeated unsuccessful efforts to control, cut back or stop gambling.
4. Is often preoccupied with gambling (e.g., having persistent thoughts of reliving past gambling experiences, handicapping or planning the next venture, thinking of ways to get money with which to gamble).
5. Often gambles when feeling distressed (e.g., helpless, guilty, anxious, depressed).
6. After losing money gambling, often returns another day to get even ("chasing one's losses").
7. Lies to conceal the extent of involvement with gambling.
8. Has jeopardized or lost a significant relationship, job, or educational or career opportunity because of gambling.
9. Relies on others to provide money to relieve financial situations caused by gambling.



#### **Gambling Prevalence in Iowa**

In 2014, IDPH funded the [\*Gambling Attitudes and Behaviors: A 2013 Survey of Adult Iowans\*](#) by the University of Northern Iowa Center for Social and Behavioral Research (UNI-CSBR). The purpose of the survey, a follow-up to a 2011 report, was to collect data from adult Iowans. The survey questionnaire was completed by a random sample of 1,826 adult Iowans, weighted to reflect the Iowa adult population. The survey provided the following information:

- Gambling rates among adult Iowans: 93.4% lifetime (ever), 77.8% during the past 12 months, and 46.4% during the past 30 days. It is estimated that almost 1.8 million adult Iowans gambled during the past 12 months.
- Problem gambling prevalence among adult Iowans: 16% of adult Iowans reported experiencing at least one symptom associated with problem gambling during the past 12 months. Nearly 1 in 3 (29.8%) Iowans reported that they know a person with financial, physical, or emotional problems caused by gambling.

In SFY 2015, IDPH funded the [Iowa Youth Survey 2014: Problem Gambling Report](#) by the Iowa Consortium for Substance Abuse Research and Evaluation (University of Iowa). The report, which is a follow-up to the 2012 report, addresses the four questions on youth gambling behaviors using 2014 Iowa Youth Survey (IYS) data which included responses from over 76,000 6th, 8th, and 11th graders:

- Who gambles among 6th, 8th, and 11th graders in Iowa? 25% of all students reported gambling at least once, and males are more than two times more likely to demonstrate lifetime gambling than females (37.2% vs. 14.6%).
- What are the significant types of gambling among youth? 14.1% reported playing cards with friends or family for money/possessions, followed by sports (12.4%), skill games (10%), and video games (8.1%).

## Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention

IDPH contracts with eleven local agencies licensed to provide problem gambling prevention, treatment and recovery support services in eleven service regions that together encompass all 99 Iowa counties. Funded problem gambling services include:

- **Counseling** for problem gamblers and those affected by the gambling of a family member and includes e-therapy (phone, secure web-based portals, and video-conferencing) which is available for eligible persons with barriers to accessing face-to-face treatment services.
- **Prevention Services** include strategies to provide information and education on the risks and responsibilities of gambling and assistance for individuals at increased risk of problem gambling.
- **Helpline referral and education** through 1-800-BETS OFF and [www.1800BETSOFF.org](http://www.1800BETSOFF.org), including a live chat option initiated in 2014.
- **Recovery Support Services** provide helpful supportive services like transportation assistance for persons receiving problem gambling counseling.
- **Training and professional development** for counselors providing treatment for problem gambling and common co-occurring conditions, like substance use and mental health disorders.

Problem Gambling Prevention and Treatment Services				
State Fiscal Year	# of Prevention Hours	# of Clients Treated	1-800 Off Helpline Calls	1800BetsOff.org Site Visits
2006	3,500	1,205	3,297	-
2007	5,963	1,146	3,613	-
2008	4,814	940	3,820	-
2009	5,816	905	3,435	-
2010	9,077	948	3,942	-
2011	7,435	789	3,695	6,156
2012	6,602	728	4,029	13,599
2013	7,682	678	4,122	14,353
2014	7,710	602	5,417	11,208
2015	8,781	888	6,311	9,524

## Treatment Effectiveness

IDPH contracts with UNI-CSBR to monitor and analyze problem gambling treatment outcomes. The [Iowa Gambling Treatment Outcomes System: 2014](#) found significant improvements for persons who received state-funded treatment. Highlights:

- 65.9% of those seeking treatment were doing so for the first time and 22.8% were returning for their 2<sup>nd</sup> round of treatment.
- Clients who received four or more services within the first 30 days after admission were more likely to complete their treatment plan compared to those who did not.
- Clients who received e-therapy were more likely to complete their treatment plan than were those who did not.
- Clients who received one or more Recovery Support Services (RSS) were more likely to complete treatment compared to those who did not.
- 92% reported fewer signs and symptoms of problem gambling at discharge

For more information on the IDPH Office of Problem Gambling Treatment and Prevention, contact Eric Preuss at [eric.preuss@idph.iowa.gov](mailto:eric.preuss@idph.iowa.gov) or (515) 281-8802.

Funding IDPH Problem Gambling Services State Fiscal Year 2016 Budget	
ACTIVITY	Amount
Treatment Services	\$1,155,110
Prevention Services	\$1,023,390
Recovery Support Services	\$114,242
1-800-BetsOff Helpline	\$87,418
Surveillance/Outcome Monitoring	\$170,860
Health Promotion	\$39,438
Training/Professional Development	\$137,908
Data Reporting System	\$83,163
IDPH Administration Costs	\$300,086
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$3,111,614</b>